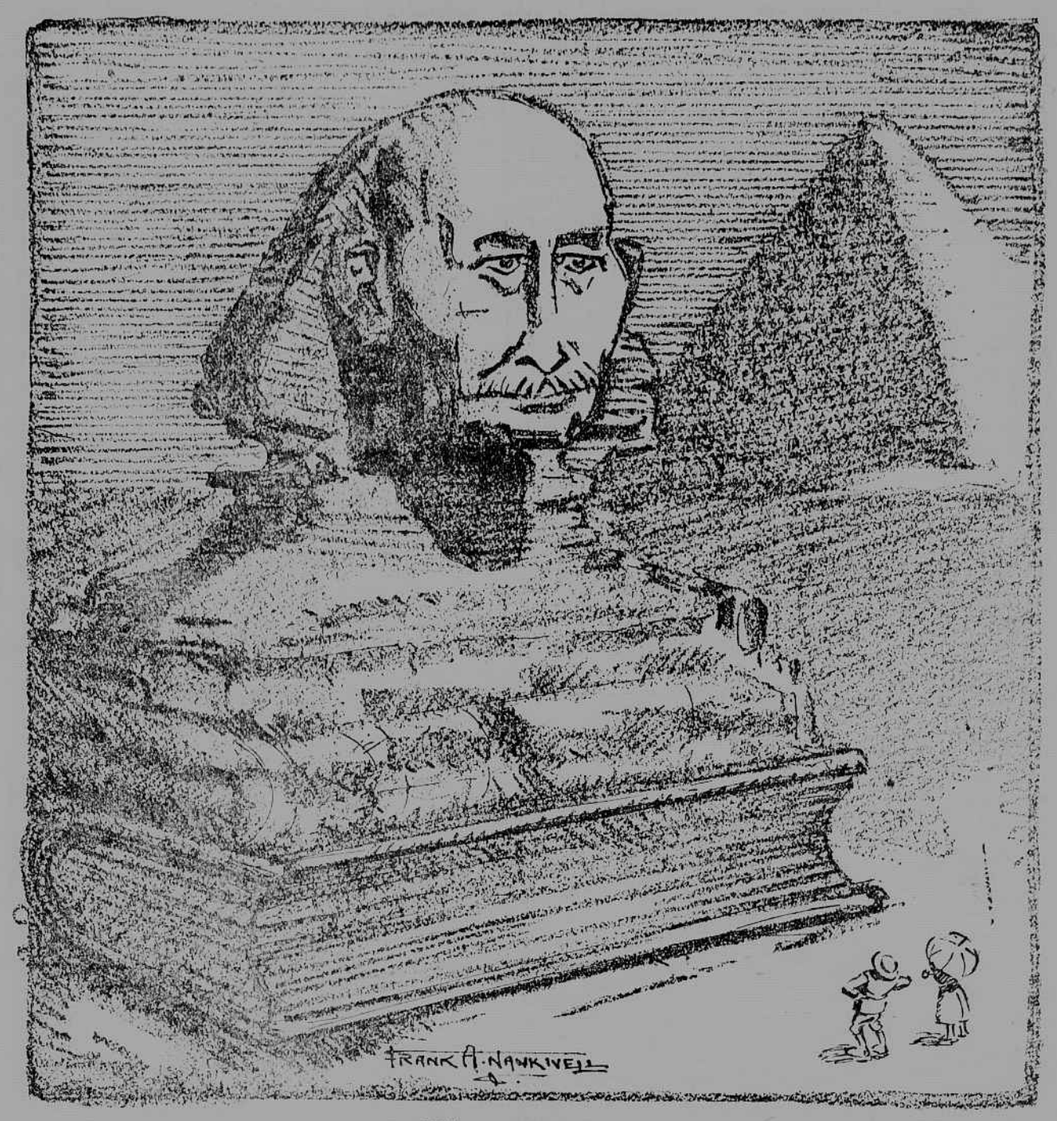
The Riddle of Col. House, Political Sphinx, Is Solved!

In an Anonymous Book Whose Authorship He Has Not Denied

"Philip Dru: Administrator," in Which He Remodels Constitutions and Societies



The Riddle

By Woodman Morrison

CHAPTER I
THE SPHINX OF POLITICS

IT WAS the discovery of the Rosetta stone that made possible the unravelling of the secrets of the Egyptian pyramids and monuments. The practice is common of referring to Colonel Edward Mandell House, President Wilson's *alter ego*, as the Sphinx of American politics. From the silent lips of the man from Texas has come no hint by which the American public could judge this man who obviously plays so important a part in the affairs of the nation.

Now another Rosetta stone has been found and the mute tongue of the Sphinx is loosened. Colonel House may be known for the manner of man he is. The stone which is the key to Colonel House's mind is a book, a book written by Colonel House himself, in which it is revealed that, millionaire and hard-headed man of business as he is supposed to be, he is back of that a dreamer with ideas of reforming the entire social and political status of America and the world. In view of Colonel House's prominence in the nation's negotiations with Europe throughout the war and his place as a member of the peace commission from the United States, the views expressed in the book on the duties of government and on international relations are of supreme importance.

The name of the book is "Philip Dru: Administrator." It was published anonymously six years ago, and its authorship has never been publicly acknowledged by Colonel House. Neither has he denied it, though charged repeatedly with having written it. The evidence as to his authorship does not rest entirely on his silence, however. Baconians, for instance, who have combed Shakespeare for ciphers, would find it easy to prove that Edward Mandell House is the author of "Philip Dru: Administrator," if for no other reason than that a hotel referred to in the book is called the Mandell House.

An even better bit of evidence, perhaps, is the fact that an intimate personal friend of Colonel House, in quoting the Texan in a magazine article, actually puts into Colonel House's mouth the exact language of Philip Dru.

There is also at least one very apparent reference to Woodrow Wilson in the book, and there are numerous allusions to public affairs that would be consistent with the knowledge of inner secrets that could be gained by a man in Colonel House's position.

As a bit of supplemental evidence, there are various eulogies on Texas, the state from which Colonel House hails.

"Philip Dru: Administrator," is not a great book. If any proof of this statement is wanted it may be found in the fact that the book attracted very little attention when it was published, six years ago. It utterly failed to catch the public imagination, as, for instance, did Bellamy's "Looking Backward," a book of similar import, in an earlier generation. Books designed to reform the world were no novelty, even before Sir Thomas More provided an adjective for all future projects of the kind by writing his "Utopia."

The Supposed Picture of Wilson

"One of his advisers was a man of distinguished lineage, but who, in his early youth, had been compelled to struggle against those unhappy conditions that followed reconstruction in the South. His intellect and force of character had brought him success in his early manhood, and he was the masterful head of a university that, under his guidance, was soon to become one of the foremost in the world. He was a trained political economist, and had rare discernment in public affairs, therefore Dru leaned heavily upon him when he began to rehabilitate the government."—*From "Philip Dru: Administrator."*

CHAPTER II
STARTLING CONCESSIONS TO GERMANY

But it is in the face of present events that the book takes on its extraordinary interest. It provides the first glimpse into the mind of the man who admittedly has the greatest influence with President Wilson and who will play a big part in drawing up the peace agreement soon to be adopted in Paris. Most extraordinary and interesting is that section of the book that places entire approval of Germany's scheme for a Mitteleuropa and turns South America over to the tender mercies of the Hun. Says one paragraph:

"Germany was to have a freer hand in the countries lying southeast of her and in Asia Minor."

Philip Dru, as administrator of the United States, also knocked the Monroe Doctrine into a cocked hat by arranging that:

"Germany was to have the freest commercial access to South America, and she was to develop those countries both with German colonists and with German capital."

However, it was not Germany alone to whom large gifts were given, although Germany fares by far the most generously at the lavish hands of Philip Dru. To make amends to the United States for repudiating the Monroe Doctrine, Dru deprives Great Britain of Canada and adds it to the United States. It is assumed that England will welcome this robbery, although a prominent Englishman a few days ago referred to Canada as "the brightest jewel in our crown," and Canadians themselves have shown no inclination to give up their allegiance to England. As compensation for this breaking up of her empire, England is given a free rein in Africa, with the exception of the French colonies.

The philanthropic Mr. Dru, as dictator of the United States, not only repudiates the Monroe Doctrine, so dear to every American heart, but hands the Philippines over to Japan. As a matter of fact, everybody gives up something except Germany, which is shown entirely in a receptive rôle. The international arrangements, briefly, are:

Japan to have the Philippines as a protectorate. "The United States to give the Philippines their independence under the protection of Japan, reserving for America and the rest of the world the freest of trade relations with the islands."

All the United States got out of this international barter was Canada. "In consideration of the United States lifting practically all custom barriers, England, after having obtained the consent of Canada, agreed to relinquish her own sphere of political influence over the Dominion."

A Few Prophecies Fulfilled

It must be remembered, of course, that the book was written in 1911 and 1912, before Germany set out to acquire the world. The book's events are supposed to transpire, however, between 1920 and 1935. A few of the things that are predicted in the book have already happened, although they seemed fantastic enough at the time they were written. Those who read the book back in 1912 probably placed little faith in the prediction of the overthrow of the Czar and the breaking up of Russia, but history has given the statement the standing of fulfilled prophecy.

So long as Colonel House refuses to acknowledge or deny the authorship of the book, the public must content itself with such evidence as can be adduced to fix the responsibility. First of all, as showing the high position of the writer, the latest advertisement on the paper cover of the book says:

"The author of this book—a man prominent in political councils—must necessarily remain anonymous. His pages are full of facts known only to the inner circle in statecraft and finance. His story shows how the seething, radical elements in the political cask to-day, under pressure of rising prices for the poor and greater privileges for the rich, literally burst into one great conflict, the Second Civil War, out of which rises the figure of Philip Dru, who shapes the future of the nation."

CHAPTER III
THE QUESTION OF COLONEL HOUSE'S AUTHORSHIP

Colonel George Harvey, editor of "The North American Review," has made frequent references to Colonel House as author of the book without once drawing a denial. In "The North American Review's War Weekly" for January 5, 1918, he says:

"Or why not Colonel House? To many he appears as the strangest or most mysterious figure so far appearing. Moreover, remarkable to relate, he himself had a like vision, and immortalized it in his thrilling account of the hard thinkings and easy doings of 'Philip Dru: Administrator' and the lovely Gloria, 'because,' as he observes in his dedicatory note with a finality worthy of Tolstoy himself, 'in the starting, the worldwide social structure was wrongly begun.' We have often wanted to ask the colonel whom he holds chiefly responsible for the false start, simple Eve, seductive Lilith, the insinuating snake or old Adam himself." . . .

Dru Was a "Silent Man," Too

"During the days that Dru was reorganizing he now and then saw Gloria. She often wondered why Philip did not tell her something of his plans, and at times she felt hurt at his reticence. She did not know that he would have trusted her with his life without hesitation, but that his sense of duty sealed his lips when it came to matters of public policy.

"He knew she would not willingly betray him, but he never took chances upon the judgment she, or any friend, might exercise as to what was or what was not important. When a thought or plan had once gone from him to another it was at the mercy of the other's discretion, and good intention did not avail if discretion and judgment were lacking. He consulted freely with those from whom he thought he could obtain help, but about important matters no one ever knew but himself his conclusions."—*From "Philip Dru: Administrator."*

Senator L. Y. Sherman, of Illinois, in a speech in the Senate September 3 made the direct accusation that "Philip Dru" was written by Colonel House. Said Senator Sherman:

"Be it ever remembered the simonpure texture of the colonel's thoughts can only be had by digesting a novel written by him. I know that heretofore it has ordinarily been mere gossip around the cloakrooms that he was the author; but I state, subject to any proof that may be offered that he is not, that I have satisfactory evidence that leads me to say that he is the author of the novel. . . . Suffice it to know, 'Philip Dru' is an autobiography of the colonel himself, and solves the conundrum of how to get rid of the Constitution."

It was after public accusation was made that Colonel House was the author of "Philip Dru" and the accusation had not been denied that a biography of Colonel House, written by his close friend, Henry Herbert Childers, also of Texas, appeared in "The North American Review." That was in April, 1916, a year before we entered the war. Mr. Childers is discussing the views of Colonel House on world affairs, and says:

"I recall his saying to me, in substance, that the whole fabric of society and government has been wrong from the beginning. I positively know that if, in a redistribution of amassed riches, the greater part of his fortune were taken from him, he would see it go with serene composure and without protest."

An Airing of Views On Society

Those views, put into the mouth of Colonel House, are taken verbatim from "Philip Dru." Continuing, Mr. Childers quotes Colonel House as follows, the quotation again being the exact language of "Philip Dru," of the book:

"Our civilization is fundamentally wrong, inasmuch as among other things it restricts efficiency. If society were properly organized there would be none who was not sufficiently clothed and fed. The laws, habits and ethical training in vogue are alike responsible for the inequalities in opportunity and the consequent wide difference between the few and the many. The result of such conditions is to render inefficient a large part of the population, the percentage differing in each country in the ratio that education and enlightenment and unselfish laws bear to ignorance, bigotry and selfish laws.

"Little progress has been made in the early centuries for the reason that opportunity was confined to a few, and it is only recently that any considerable part of the world's population has been in a position to become efficient. Therefore, as an economic problem, divorced from the realm of ethics, the far-sighted statesman of to-morrow, if not of to-day, will labor to the end that every child may have an opportunity to accomplish that for which it is best suited. Their bodies will be properly fed and clothed, so that life may mean something more than a struggle for existence. Humanity as a whole will then be able to do its share toward the conquest of the forces of Nature, and there will be brought about an intellectual and spiritual quickening that will make our civilization of to-day seem crude, as selfish and illogical as that of the Dark Ages."

On the flyleaf of the book is a quotation from Mazzini. The article in "The North American Review" says:

Agreeing with Mazzini, Colonel House thinks there should be "no war of classes, no unjust violation of the rights of property, but a constant disposition to ameliorate the condition of the classes least favored by fortune."

There are said to be extant copies of "Philip Dru" autographed by Colonel House, but if there be any such the owners keep them from general observation.

So far as a confession of authorship by Colonel House is concerned, he does not directly admit it nor does he deny it; he merely declines to discuss the matter. The publisher of the book, B. W. Huebsch, 225 Fifth Avenue, is equally reticent so far as names are concerned, though he admits that in a recent conversation with the author he said that he was still willing to stand behind anything that he had written in the book.

Mr. Huebsch also disclosed that the author was taken ill in the fall of 1911 and took advantage of that moment to write "Philip Dru." Colonel House was not feeling well in the fall of 1911 and went to Europe for a few months' vacation.

Dru "On the Wrongs of the South"

"The great conflict covering the years from 1860 to 1865 was still more than a memory, though but few living had taken part in it. The victors in that mighty struggle thought they had been magnanimous to the defeated but the well-informed Southerner knew that they had been made to pay the most stupendous penalty ever exacted in modern times. At one stroke of the pen two thousand millions of their property was taken from them. A pension system was then inaugurated that taxed the resources of the nation to pay. By the year 1927 more than five thousand millions had gone to those who were of the winning side. Of this the South was taxed her part, receiving nothing in return."—*From "Philip Dru: Administrator."*

CHAPTER IV
WHAT THE BOOK IS ABOUT

The story of "Philip Dru" is that of a young man who is introduced to the readers on commencement day at West Point. It was in 1920, a time when—

"Wealth had grown so strong that the few were about to strangle the many, and among the great masses of the people there was sullen and rebellious discontent.

"The laborer in the cities, the producer on the farm, the merchant, the professional man and all save organized capital and its satellities saw a gloomy and hopeless future."

Philip Dru was graduating into his chosen profession, the army, but on this big day he took no part in the festivities, but stood apart "depressed and out of touch with the triumphant blare of militarism." Into his meditations steps Gloria Strawn, a daughter of that "debased power of wealth" about which Philip has been cogitating. Then for some pages the two discuss the wrongs of the universe, employing in their conversation most of the platitudes that embellish the talk of young people about the time they leave school and set forth to right the wrongs of the world. Philip had a voice that was "tense and vibrant," and he "talked in quick, sharp jerks" that made a deep impression on Gloria. Before their conversation ended they had run the gamut of mental healing, theosophy, materialism and spiritualism, evolution and most of the other isms.

Philip takes his commission in the army, however, and goes to a Texas fort, where Gloria soon follows to visit her brother. Getting lost in the desert together, the sun so affects Philip's eyes that he decides to quit the army, his high sense of honor forbidding his taking the government's money when he could not give full service.

The scene shifts back to New York. Here Philip and Gloria prowl about in the East Side, and are taken to the home of the usual "hungry little bootblack" just as his mother is dying of starvation, in spite of the ministrations of a "kindly German woman." They bury the mother, and Philip says:

"Let us go; she needs us no longer, but there are those who do. The experience has been my lesson, and from now on it is my purpose to consecrate my life toward the betterment of such as these. Our thoughts, our habits, our morals, our civilization itself is wrong, else it would not be possible for just this sort of suffering to exist."

Thus Philip finds his sphere in life and enters upon it. Gloria becomes a settlement worker until her banker father and her society worshiping mother, one of those women who are "convinced men were placed here for the sole purpose of shielding and protecting women," object. Then, on Philip's advice, she decides to do her missionary work among the social butterflies of her set.

It is interesting to know, in these days when socialism is so vividly before the world, that Colonel House believes that the world has now reached a stage where socialism is possible. Philip is discussing the subject with Gloria's banker father, who says:

"I know that things are not as they should be, but how can there be a more even distribution of wealth without lessening the efficiency of the strong, able and energetic men and without making mendicants of the indolent and improvident? If we had pure socialism we would never get the highest endeavor out of any one, for it would not seem worth while to do more than the average. The race would then go backward instead of lifting itself higher by the insistent desire to excel and to reap the rich reward that comes with success."

To which Philip replies:

"In the past your contention would be unanswerable, but the moral tone and thought of the world is changing. You take it for granted that man must have in sight some material reward in order to bring forth the best within him. I believe that mankind is awakening to the fact that material compensation is far less to be desired than spiritual compensation. The feeling will grow, it is growing, and when it comes to full fruition the world will find but little difficulty in attaining a certain measure of altruism. I agree with you that this much to be desired state of society cannot be altogether reached by laws, however drastic. Socialism as dreamed by Karl Marx cannot be entirely brought about by a comprehensive system of state ownership and by the levelling of wealth. If that were done without a spiritual leavening the result would be largely as you suggest."

Enter the Villain Of the Piece

Philip progresses with his philanthropic work and grows in popularity. Enter now the sinister figure of Senator Selwyn. The Senator is the leader of predatory wealth. After you have read Colonel House's description of this masterly man and the way he bought the Presidency, the Senate and the Supreme Court you get just one guess as to the original of the man the author had in mind. But even the gods may be caught napping, and the whole scheme is exposed through a forgotten dictaphone which John Thor left on the machine in his office while Senator Selwyn told him all about the buying of the different departments of the government. Thor, be it known, is the Wall Street money king who holds the financial interests of the nation by the throat. But there is a poor but honest secretary in Thor's office who hears the evidence of the dictaphone and carries it to the newspapers.

CHAPTER V
THE PEOPLE MEET AND DEFEAT AUTOCRACY

Then comes the revolution. Philip Dru's West Point training now stands him in good stead. He does not believe in war, but if there must be war he is for "force without stint." The army of autocracy is gathered at Chicago under the command of General Newton. Dru gathers two armies, one at Madison, Wis., where his views had found especial favor, and the other at Des Moines, Iowa. Finding himself thus between two fires, General Newton retreats to Buffalo. Dru, whose army now numbered 400,000 men, moved eastward, but, instead of attacking Newton as the latter expected, kept right on past Buffalo, bound for New York.

An Impenetrable Battleship

"Dru invited the Strawns to accompany him to Newport News to witness the launching of a new type of battleship. It was said to be, and probably was, impenetrable. Experts who had tested a model built on a large scale had declared that this invention would render obsolete every battleship in existence. The principle was this: Running back from the bow for a distance of 60 feet only about 4 feet of the hull showed above the waterline, and this part of the deck was concaved and of the smoothest, hardest steel. Then came several turreted sections upon which guns were mounted. Around these turrets ran rims of polished steel, two feet in width and six inches thick. These rims began four feet from the waterline and ran four feet above the level of the turret decks. The rims were so nicely adjusted with ball bearings that the smallest blow would send them spinning around, therefore, a shell could not penetrate because it would glance off."—*From "Philip Dru: Administrator."*

Newton sees at once that he has been outgeneraled and that the bulwark of autocracy will fall into Dru's hands unless something is done. Therefore General Newton leaves his prepared positions and moves out to attack. Dru is outnumbered, but he has laid his plans carefully and is confident of the result. His idea is to make the victory so decisive that one battle will end the war. So at last the people and autocracy are face to face, and now is fought "the Battle of Elma":

"General Dru had many spies in the enemies' camp, and some of these succeeded in crossing the lines each night in order to give him what information they had been able to gather.

"Some of these spies passed through the lines as late as 11 o'clock the night before the battle, and from them he learned that a general attack was to be made upon him the next day at 6 o'clock in the morning.

"As far as he could gather, and from his own knowledge of the situation, it was General Newton's purpose to break his centre. The reason Newton had this in mind was that he thought Dru's line was far flung, and he believed that if he could drive through the centre he could then throw each wing into confusion and bring about a crushing defeat.

"As a matter of fact, Dru's line was not far flung, but he had a few troops strung out for many miles in order to deceive Newton, because he wanted him to try and break his centre.

"Up to this time he had taken no one into his confidence, but at midnight he called his division commanders to his headquarters and told them his plan of battle.

"They were instructed not to impart any information to the commanders of brigades until 2 o'clock. The men were then to be aroused and given a hasty breakfast, after which they were to be ready to march by 3 o'clock.

"Recent arrivals had augmented his army to approximately 500,000 men. General Newton had, as far as he could learn, approximately 600,000, so there were more than a million of men facing one another.

"Dru had a twofold purpose in preparing at 3 in the morning. First, he wanted to take no chances upon General Newton's time of attack. His information as to 6 o'clock he thought reliable, but it might have been given out to deceive him and a much earlier engagement might be contemplated.

"His other reason was that he intended to flank Newton on both wings.

"It was his purpose to send, under cover of night, 125,000 men to the right of Newton and 125,000 to his left, and have them conceal themselves behind wooded hills until noon, and then to drive in on him from both sides.

"He was confident that with 250,000 determined men, protected by the fortifications he had been able to erect, and with the ground of his own choosing, which had a considerable elevation over the valley through which Newton would have to march, he could hold his position until noon. He did not count upon actual fighting before 8 o'clock, or perhaps not before 9.

"Dru did not attempt to rest, but continued through the night to instruct his staff officers, and to arrange, as far as he could, for each contingency. Before 2 o'clock he was satisfied with the situation and felt assured of victory.

"He was pleased to see the early morning hours develop a fog, for this would cover the march of his left and right wings, and they would not have to make so wide

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